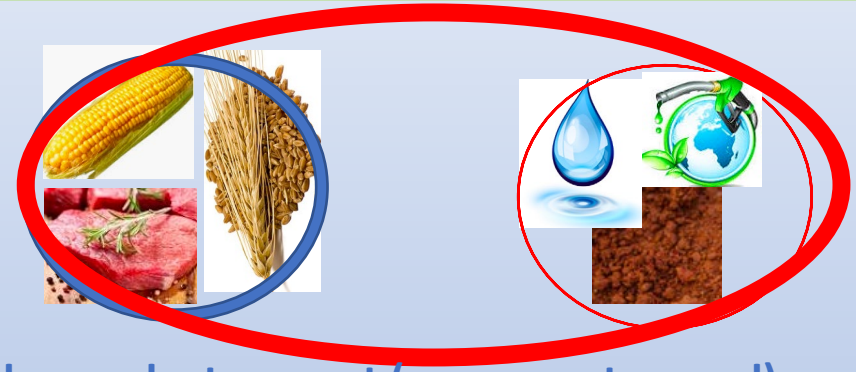
Global Trade

a key enabler of efficient food production



A food is NOT just the product you eat (corn, meat, cereal)
- the resources consumed to produce it must be accounted for!

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United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)
Roundtable
Circular Economy - Fostering Circularity in Food Trade (16 November 2021, 13:00-15:00)
On-line, Palais des Nations, Geneva

Starting points …

- Feeding the world is a challenge but perfectly feasible
- Population has tripled since WWII (2.5 billion to 7.5 billion)
- Dietary requirements and expectations changing rapidly towards a ‘cosmopolitan’ diet
- Cannot feed the world without global food trade
- Food should be grown as **efficiently** and **sustainably** as possible
- Must support the most efficient and sustainable producers – e.g. match zone (country/region) to the efficiency and sustainability of food production
- Policy and economics must support (NOT penalise) efficiency & sustainability
- Use global trade to bring efficiently produced food to markets
- C emissions (CO_2 and CH_4) is a GLOBAL issue NOT Regional/Local

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Circular Economy

- The ‘circular economy’ is primarily about resource use efficiency
- It is NOT just about cycling resources - the starting point is to use FEWER resources in the 1st instance!
- System efficiency is fundamental – **cannot assume that if a waste is ‘used’ then the system is in some way more sustainable**
- **A ‘circular efficiency’ approach** is needed, whereby upstream inputs are minimised (e.g. using precision agriculture, climate, soils, technological capabilities, farming practices, etc.) and downstream residues/by-products (manures/crop residues) are ‘circulated’
- Must avoid The **Jevons Paradox** – creating a ‘market’ for waste generates more waste!
- Global trade in both food (feed) and back-trade in input resources required to achieve a reasonable level of ‘sustainability’
- On the risk side: supply chain integrity; food safety; ‘politicising’ food; etc.
- Regulation is a powerful and necessary tool to support sustainable systems

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Key points …

- Global trade in food is essential to ensure the scale and variety necessary to meet the exponential rise in global demand for food
- Local food production cannot meet this demand
- Global trade is a key enabler of efficient food production and ‘circularity’
- There is a limited land base and input resources (e.g. P) for food production
- Future is a hybrid local-**GLOBAL** food market, with **GLOBAL** the dominant (> 90%) and both local and GLOBAL resource recycling loops
- Market and regulatory systems should incentivise **GLOBAL** trade in produce from countries that are the most efficient producers (i.e. those in the upper echelons of production efficiency, sustainability, quality and safety)

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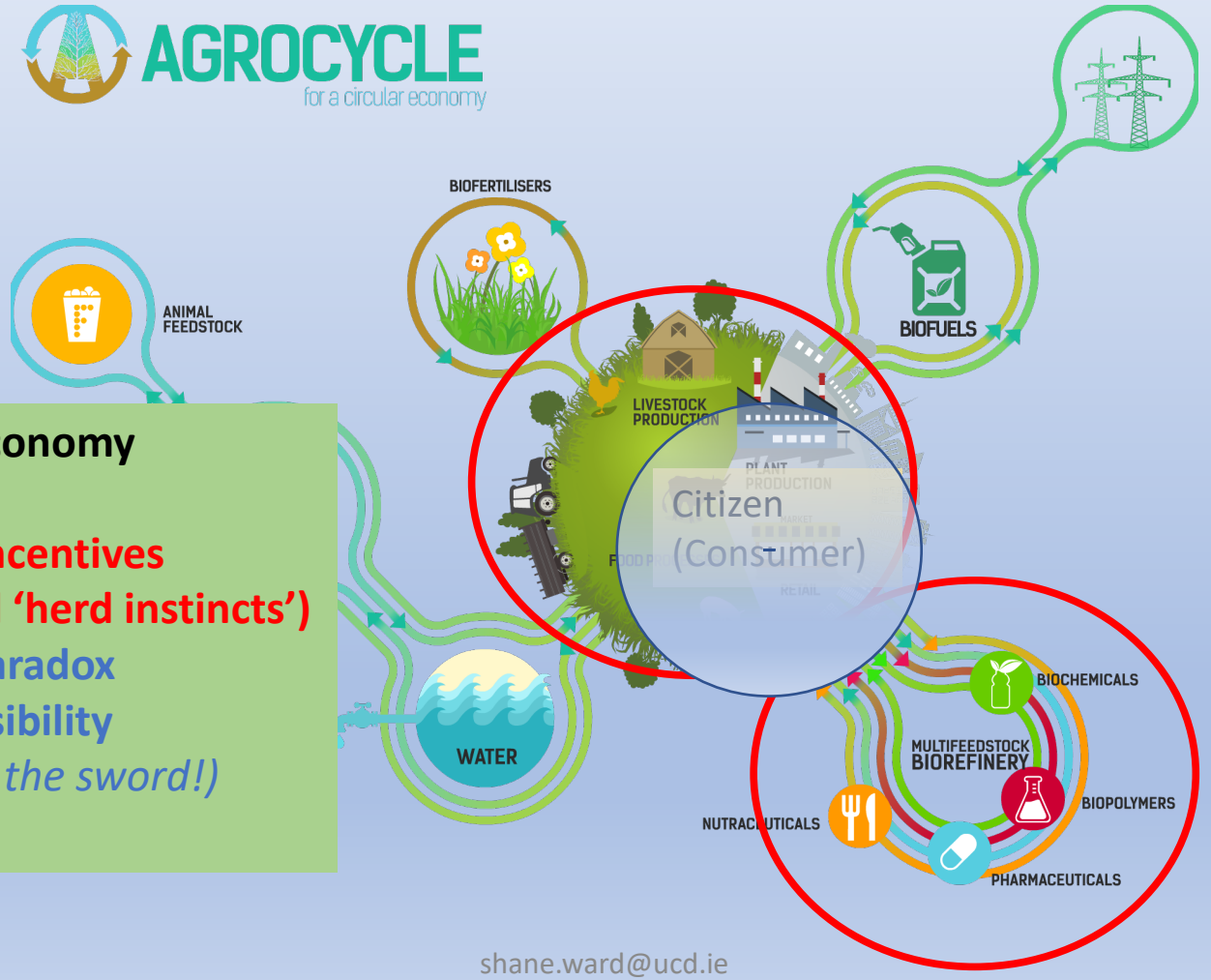
System Efficiency & Sustainability

Policy MUST be well informed!



Critical Levers for Circular Economy

- **Efficiency**
- **Consumer education & incentives**
- **Societal responses (avoid 'herd instincts')**
- Must avoid **The Jevons Paradox**
- **Corporate Social Responsibility**
- **Policy** *(Pen mightier than the sword!)*
- **Regulation**

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